



[Rottenhammer.

THE HOLY FAMILY WITH SS. ELIZABETH AND JOHN.



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CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE
MISCELLANEA ..	353	THE HIGHWAY OF THE CROSS.	
BY SHANNON'S BANKS. By		VIII. THE LITHOSTROTOS.	
Annie M. Smithson ..	356	By Rev. Placid Wareing, C.P.	375
FATHER CHARLES OF MOUNT		THE OWNER OF GORREESTON	
ARGUS. By Rev. Oswald		HALL. Chaps. XV., XVI.,	
Donnelly, C.P. ..	365	XVII. By Felicia Curtis ..	379
STARS OF BETHLEHEM. By		A NEW YEAR HOMILY ..	390
Mother St. Jerome ..	369	THE GUILD OF BLESSED	
AN OPTIMIST. By Thomas		GABRIEL FOR BOYS AND	
Kelly ..	370	GIRLS ..	392
THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM. By		IN THANKSGIVING ..	396
Jessie A. Anderson ..	374		

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Miscellanea.

WE have to apologise to the great number of our readers who have ordered copies (many of them paid for) of the Life of Father Paul Mary Pakenham for the unavoidable delay in its issue and to beg their patience for a little while longer. We had hoped to have the book ready by December 20th at latest, but on the morning of that date we received a letter from the publishers telling of unforeseen difficulties which would defer the appearance of the Life till after the Christmas holidays. However, the book has been in print for some time and its publication cannot be much longer delayed. Annoying as the disappointment is, it can-

not be helped, and is no fault of ours, and we can only throw ourselves on the indulgent kindness of our friends.

One advantage those who have already ordered the book will enjoy over those who have not yet done so. We received too late for mention in our last number an intimation from the publishers that, contrary to their expectations, it would not be possible to issue the book at a price less than one and sixpence net. We have seen a sample of the style in which it is to be produced, and we agree that the price could not well be less than one and sixpence. But we had already advertised the book at one shilling and had received many orders for it, and knowing this the publishers have consented to our supplying at the shilling rate those who have sent in orders for the book so far. All who will have ordered the book, therefore, before the appearance of this issue of THE CROSS will have it supplied to them at the originally published price of one shilling net. This will, of course, mean a loss to the publishers and to some extent to ourselves, but it is the only fair way we can see out of the difficulty. From January 1st the book will be sold at the now fixed price of one and sixpence, and we think no one will regard the charge as other than moderate.

Once again our Holy Father the Pope has returned to the subject of peace. Taking occasion of the Consistory held on December 6th he addressed to the assembled Cardinals an allocution which reiterated the views stated in the letter directed by him to the belligerent nations and their rulers on the anniversary of the outbreak of the war. That letter was curiously interpreted by some of the nations interested, and Catholic preachers and pressmen insisted that because His Holiness spoke of a "just" peace, he meant a peace entirely satisfactory to the nations which have justice on their side in the quarrel: in other words a slashing victory to one of the parties to the conflict. And as both parties are apparently convinced of their own rectitude, of course the Pope's words meant nothing. His Holiness has taken care that there can be no misinterpretation of his latest pronouncement. "We feel obliged by Our Apostolic office to inculcate anew the only means which can quickly put an end to this tremendous conflagration and secure a peace which the whole of humanity ardently desires, namely, a peace which shall be just and lasting *and not advantageous to one of the belligerent parties alone.*" There is little possibility of misunderstanding or glossing these words, and there is only one way of preventing the impression they may be likely to create—by suppressing them. This is precisely what has been done in France: in the Catholic newspapers and reviews—such as the "*Revue Catholique d'Apologétique*," which professes to publish the allocution in its entirety, and even adds a commentary—the

italicized words have been omitted altogether and the word "lasting" has been changed into "possible." The suppression of the important clause leaves the rest of the Papal address open to "interpretation," and the suggestion, of course, is that the peace for which the Pope appeals is in present circumstances *impossible*. Let us hope that it was the infidel Government which engineered the suppression, and that the Eldest Daughter of the Church, renewed and regenerated by the red baptism of war, has had nothing to do with it. But suppressive methods are hardly calculated to show that truth and justice are the first consideration.

For the rest His Holiness once more lays down the conditions by which an honourable peace could almost at once be attained, namely, those which have been found satisfactory in similar circumstances—"that in the direct or indirect exchange of ideas, the aspirations of each party should be clearly set forth and calmly deliberated with sincere goodwill and a clear conscience, eliminating unjust and impossible pretensions, due regard being observed, in the matter of compensations and equitable agreements, of what is fair and possible." And he exhorts the contending parties to "make concessions" and "give up advantages which have been hoped for" "even at the cost of certain sacrifices, so as to save themselves from the awful responsibility before God and men of the continuation of this unparalleled butchery, which, if it should be prolonged, may mark the beginning of decadence for Europe from the height of the civilization and prosperity to which it has been raised by the Christian religion." These are words by which all the belligerent Powers are hard hit. Whether they will be hearkened to by any is another matter: but no one can fail to admire the wisdom of the Father of the faithful or sympathise with his attitude, which indeed is the only Christian one, though laughed to scorn by many so-called Christians. His words will serve at least to impress upon his loyal children the peace which should be the constant intention of their prayers while this inhuman butchery lasts.

One can only hope, in the light of the Holy Father's pathetic appeal, that the story which has been going the rounds of the Catholic Press concerning the meeting of Cardinal Von Hartmann and Cardinal Gasquet in Rome is simply a journalistic fabrication. On a visit to His Eminence Cardinal Von Hartmann, the English Cardinal is said to have been accosted by his German confrère with the words: "Your Eminence, we will not speak of the war." "Your Eminence," replied Cardinal Gasquet, "we will not talk of peace." The story, if true, would redound much more to the credit of Cardinal Von Hartmann than to that of Cardinal Gasquet.

By Shannon's Banks.

The hours I spent with thee, dear heart,
Are as a string of pearls to me;
I count them over, ev'ry one apart,
My Rosary, my Rosary.

MOIRA O'SULLIVAN ceased singing abruptly, as the tall figure of her uncle passed softly across the drawingroom and stepped on to the verandah through the open French window.

"Mother," she asked, "why does Uncle Desmond always leave the room when I sing that song?"

A cloud fell across Mrs. O'Sullivan's still pretty face.

"That is an old story, Moira," she said sadly, "a story of twenty-five years ago, the one romance of your uncle's life—never forgotten by him."

"Uncle Desmond and a romance!" cried Moira. "Mother, who would ever imagine it—he is so grave and stern."

"Ah! if you had known him in the past you would not say that," was the reply.

"Tell me about it, mother—do! Uncle won't come back for a while; I can see him walking up and down with his cigar."

"Well! I often meant to tell you, Moira; it may help you to understand your uncle a little better."

It was a beautiful evening in June, and the pretty flower-decked drawingroom of Desmond O'Neil's comfortable home on the outskirts of the historic "City of the Treaty" seemed especially adapted at the present moment for confidences and bitter-sweet memories. The piano stood open with Moira's music scattered around, the song of the "Rosary" on top just as she had flung it down when she noticed her uncle leaving the room; through the windows came the scent of the mignonette and the sweet-brier; in the trees in the avenue the birds were saying their noisy good-nights, and over all a sense of peace and prosperity seemed to breathe. A happy home indeed.

And yet no one looking at Desmond O'Neil would ever have called him a happy man. He was a solicitor with a large and lucrative practice, besides considerable private means, but with the reputation of being a hard, cold man, and somewhat of a cynic. Yet he was a religious man, a good Catholic in every way, and indeed in his niece's eyes almost too strict. He was always kind to her, indeed, ever since as a little mite of four years she and her widowed mother had come to live with him; but he was a man who seldom smiled, and children do not take easily to such. But now Moira was all interest, eager to hear that long-buried romance

of her uncle's youth, and so sitting on a low stool by her mother's chair, she listened intently as Mrs. O'Sullivan spoke in soft tones, so as not to be heard by that tall figure which continued to pace up and down on the verandah, the tip of his cigar glowing in the darkness.

Twenty-five years ago Desmond O'Neil was a young man of twenty-four. He was in his father's office, but his legal studies occupied only a very small part of young O'Neil's time and thoughts. He was ardently patriotic, and at a time when the Gaelic Revival was in its infancy, he was one of the first to join its ranks, and to throw himself heart and soul into the movement. He was an enthusiast for Irish industries and customs, and above all he worked might and main for the revival of the old tongue. The very name of England and the English was anathema to him, and he hated both with the intense fire of the Celtic nature. It was small wonder, for in his veins ran the blood of those who in the past had suffered—aye, and died—for their Faith and Fatherland. And then by the irony of fate he met Rose Saxton. He was spending the evening at a friend's house, and a Cinderella dance had been hastily arranged by the young folk. Standing by herself, with a rather bored expression on her pretty face, Desmond noticed a tall, fair girl in a simple white frock, with a crimson rose in her sash.

The son of the house stood near and Desmond asked him who she was.

"Who? oh! I see," replied Charlie Halpin, "that is Rose Saxton, a friend of Nellie's. They met abroad somewhere and got rather friendly, and Nell asked her here for a visit, as she had never been to Ireland before and was anxious to study the manners and customs of the natives! She is very wealthy and almost alone in the world, except for an aunt who is here with her. Pretty, isn't she? And such a voice! You should hear her sing 'The Rosary!' But she is English of the English, old chap—not your style at all," and he went off laughing.

No, not his style, perhaps, but some magnetic force stronger than his will seemed to draw Desmond in spite of himself to the girl. An Irish reel was in progress, and having obtained an introduction he asked her to dance.

She lifted her eyebrows and then smiled.

"I do not know your Irish dances," she said, "but I will give you a valse later if it is danced."

"I do not valse," said Desmond briefly. "I only dance our national dances."

"Really?" and she turned to regard more closely this tall, dark-haired Irishman who, tall as she was, could still look down into her blue eyes with his own of Irish grey.

At this moment Nellie Halpin came up to ask Miss Saxton to sing.

"Sing the 'Rosary,' Rose, do!" she entreated, "and Desmond will play an obligato on his violin to my piano."

And presently Rose Saxton's exquisitely trained contralto rang through the room in the words of that lovely song, the wail of Desmond's violin softly rising and falling with true musical sympathy.

The hours I spent with thee, dear heart,
Are as a string of pearls to me;
I count them over, ev'ry one apart,
My Rosary, My Rosary.

Each hour a pearl, each pearl a prayer,
To still a heart in absence wrung;
I tell each bead unto the end—
And there a Cross is hung.

O memories that bless and burn!
O barren gain and bitter loss!
I kiss each bead and strive at last to learn
To kiss the Cross, sweetheart, to kiss the Cross.

Never had Desmond listened to a song so sympathetically rendered. He tried to murmur his thanks as the applause died away, and Rose Saxton laughed lightly, as she replied, "I am very fond of that song. It is the only Rosary that I know," she added, "for I am not a Catholic."

That was their first meeting, but not their last. They met constantly, drawn together by that mysterious force which is still the strongest power that our human nature knows. It was midsummer, and they went for long cycle rides and walks through the fair country round Limerick. They talked on every subject under the sun—those two who were as far apart as the antipodes in character, training, and environment. Rose was a typical English girl of the cultured class, quiet and reserved, rather cold in her manner, and trained to take a common-sense and practical view of life. As to her religion, it was that of the majority of English Protestants. She said a few short mechanical prayers night and morning, and went to church at least once on Sunday—weather permitting of course—because it was the "correct thing" to do.

And this was the type of girl who became the object of Desmond's passionate devotion—Desmond with his Celtic temperament, ardent, impulsive, often unpractical—whose religion was to him a living reality,

More present to Faith's vision keen,
Than any outward object seen:

whose heritage of faith was a treasure left to him sanctified by the blood of martyrs, and whose love of his motherland—his dear, dark Rosaleen—came only second to his religion.

His friends saw and wondered how it would end, and his comrades of the Gaelic Revival were sore at heart. Two

months went by and then Desmond spoke to Rose one lovely August evening as they were strolling in the garden together. Only a few halting words; he had meant to say so much—and behold, he was suddenly bereft of speech. But she understood, and the gates of Eden swung back on their golden hinges and these two entered hand in hand.

A few days of idyllic happiness followed, while they walked together as though they trod on air in the radiance of that light "that never was on sea or land," and then—Desmond awoke to the reality of life with a sudden shock.

It was his father who spoke to him, and when Desmond admitted that he and Rose loved each other, Mr. O'Neil spoke of the religious question.

"I presume that she is willing to be received into the Catholic Church?" he asked. "I am sure, my boy, that otherwise you would not think of making her your wife."

"I have not spoken to her of it yet, father," Desmond answered, "but I am sure she will be quite willing."

He broached the subject to her at their next meeting, and felt a sudden tightening of the heart-strings as she lifted her clear blue eyes to his, and said in mild surprise:

"Oh! Desmond! I did not think you would bother over religion! I really don't see any necessity for doing so. Of course I know you Irish think a lot of your faith and all that, but I think, dear, I would prefer to remain a Protestant."

"But Rose," he urged, "would you not get instructed in the Catholic doctrine? At least, dearest, do that much for me!"

"It would be no use, Desmond," she said, and laughed lightly. "I could never understand it. And then besides, it is all so hard—that religion of yours—keeping Lent and mortifying yourself, and going out fasting to early Mass. How *could* you imagine me doing that on a winter's morning without my cup of tea? No, Desmond, it is no good. I have been spoilt all my life and I wouldn't begin to be different now!"

He talked in vain for that day, and had to give up the task. After a few more days he tried again, but with the same result. Indeed Rose was somewhat inclined to resent his recurring to the subject, and spoke almost irritably to him. Desmond was surprised, for she possessed the treasure of a good temper—that priceless gift in a woman.

She noticed the hurt expression on his face, and repented instantly.

"I'm sorry, dear," she said, and laid her hand on his with a movement that was a caress in itself. His other hand closed over it immediately.

"Don't worry, darling," he said quietly, "I am sorry I bothered you."

That evening Desmond went to see his greatest friend in Limerick—a priest attached to one of the religious houses there. They had known each other all their lives, and although Father Sinclair was some years older than Desmond

O'Neil, still he was always ready to enter into all the joys and sorrows of the younger man.

To him Desmond told all.

"What shall I do, Father?" he ended; "will you see her and try to get her at least to listen to the fundamental truths of our faith? Try and get her interested, will you? Otherwise if she remains obstinate, what can I do? For me to marry a Protestant is, you know, out of the question—I would rather give her up—although that would break my heart!"

Father Sinclair did not smile at this passionate outbreak; he had a rare gift of sympathy and showed it now.

"My dear boy, don't worry and don't lose heart so soon. I will see her as you desire, and I promise you to do my best. But there is one great help you can give me—your prayers. Pray constantly, and storm the gates of Heaven for her conversion, and above all, that God's Will may be accomplished in you both."

Desmond thanked him and came away, slipping into the church for a few quiet minutes before the tabernacle. The church was almost empty; just a few kneeling figures could be discerned in the dusk, through which the sanctuary lamp burned dimly. And Desmond fell on his knees and prayed earnestly, prayed as we only pray—God forgive us!—when we entreat Heaven for our heart's desire.

"Speak to her, dear Lord!" he implored; "reveal yourself to her and touch her heart. Bring her into your Church. I ask it at any cost—even at the sacrifice of all my life's happiness!"

He stopped, as a strange, cold feeling swept over him. What had made him say that? It seemed as though he was impelled in spite of himself to speak the words.

"What have I done?" he asked himself in dull wonder.

He rose from his knees after a while, feeling still strange and unlike himself. And yet he did not regret that prayer—he could not, although when it was uttered he seemed to feel all the joy of life slipping away from him.

Father Sinclair fulfilled his promise and went to see Rose. In common with many another she felt the power of his magnetic personality, that power which could sway multitudes from the pulpit, and in the confessional could so easily break down the stony barriers between God and the sinner. She agreed to go to him for instructions, and went regularly for a week.

At the end of that time she spoke to Desmond.

"It's no use," she said to him, and there was a strange little break in her voice; "it's no use! I cannot believe in your religion—I *cannot*!"

Then she turned to him swiftly, as she said passionately: "And I'm *glad* I can't believe in it, for if I did I would never have another day's peace or happiness!"

He was troubled and amazed, but he did not attempt to answer her, for he had no clue to the workings of her soul—that soul which was now in its birth throes.

She stayed away from Father Sinclair for a while, and then Desmond heard from the priest that she was again going to him.

And all this time Desmond was praying, and not he alone, but the Halpins, with whom Rose was staying, and Desmond's own people, including his favourite sister Mary.

Two months went by, and then Rose told Desmond that she was to be received into the Church. He could hardly credit it when she told him, and his face was radiant with delight. But Rose was strangely quiet and subdued, although that she was happy with a happiness beyond words, was plain to be seen. She only spoke to him for a few minutes, and he felt rather hurt, for she was more reserved with him than usual.

In the evening as he was walking homewards he met Father Sinclair. The priest also seemed graver and more silent than was his wont, and when Desmond spoke of the joy which Rose's news had given him, he smiled rather sadly, and it seemed to Desmond that in the priest's kind eyes he saw a great pity.

He was puzzled and spoke out his thoughts in his usual impulsive fashion.

"What is it, Father?—Why do you look so grave? I thought you would be delighted! And Rose too—she seems so quiet and strange—I cannot make her out!"

Father Sinclair did not speak for a moment, and then he said quietly:

"Desmond, my dear boy, it may be that our Lord is going to send you a hard trial—one that will test your faith and courage very severely. I cannot say more now, but may God bless and comfort you."

He turned away abruptly, and walked quickly down the road before his friend could speak again. Desmond went home still wondering what it all meant. The only solution that appeared feasible was that Rose was still doubtful on some matter of faith and that Father Sinclair feared that even at the last moment she would fail to become a Catholic. Then he received a short note from the priest telling him that Rose was to be received a fortnight later and that she wished to see no one during the intervening time—not even Desmond. The priest added that he would receive her himself and that the ceremony was to be very quiet and that Rose wished no one to be present. Desmond felt inexpressibly hurt at this note. Why did Rose refuse to see him now above all times? He had pictured her reception into the Church and her First Communion so differently! He had hoped to be near her, to offer his prayers and thanksgiving with her. Well! it was not to be. And poor Desmond tried to console himself with the reflection that it must be her English temperament. He endeavoured to feel happy in the thought of his approaching marriage, and he made up his mind that he would persuade Rose to be married soon. Why should they wait? There was no reason for delay. So he argued,

and still there remained the presentiment of coming evil which he could not shake off.

Two weeks passed and Rose was baptized and received Holy Communion. Another went by, and then Desmond received a note asking him to call and see her that evening. She was alone, sitting by the fire—for the autumn evening was chill—when he entered the room. She rose to receive him and he went forward eagerly, all his heart's love in his eyes.

"Rose!" was all he could say, and he extended his arms to draw her to him. But she drew back quietly. Desmond had never been prodigal in demonstrations of affection, for his ideal of love and marriage was the Catholic one; still he felt that Rose need not have been so cold now, and he looked rather wistfully at her, as she stood on the hearthrug, a tall, slim figure in white serge. The short afternoon was drawing to a close, it was dusk already, but the firelight fell on the girl's golden hair, and the scent of the violets she wore came to him where he stood.

Alas! he was often to see that vision again; it was to be his companion through many a restless day and sleepless night.

There was silence for a few minutes—Rose seemed to find it hard to speak, and Desmond was waiting to hear what she would say.

"Sit down, Desmond," she said at last, "I want to speak to you."

He obeyed in silence, and she resumed her own seat, but still she was silent, gazing straight before her with serious, troubled eyes.

Then she turned and looked at him.

"Desmond," she said, "I am going to cause you great pain; I know that, but I cannot help it. God's Will must be done."

She paused again and her voice shook, but she regained her self-control and continued:

"I often told you that if ever I did become a Catholic I would be no half-hearted one, it would be all or nothing with me—if I really found I *could* believe in your faith it would alter the whole of my life. I could never live the life that so many Catholics live in this world—half-an-hour for their Mass of obligation on Sundays—Confession and Holy Communion as seldom as possible—and living their daily lives as carelessly and irreligiously as if they knew not the grace of the Sacraments. I know, Desmond, that you are not of such—the example of your living faith has been the cause, under Divine grace, of my conversion. But that there are many of the like you know well. They are a disgrace to the Catholic Church, and is it small wonder that non-Catholics ask what good can be in a religion that bears such fruit?"

She paused for a few moments, and then gave a sad little laugh.

"Ah! Desmond," she said, "you will think I am

early criticising—I, a week-old Catholic! But indeed these are old thoughts of mine—I have been much with Catholics abroad, and the 'stranger within the gates' is the one who notices the most. And how Catholics *can* lead such careless lives I do not know—they cannot realise the bad example they give. Did you ever hear, Desmond, what a very great Protestant divine once said about the Catholic faith? He said that if every Catholic in the world *really* lived up to their faith for just twenty-four hours, that by sunset every Protestant would be converted. Well! I am going to try to live up to my faith, anyway—in thanksgiving for that unspeakable gift."

She paused and Desmond said nothing—only waited in silence—for what he knew not, and she continued then speaking evidently with more difficulty and as one speaks who is in suffering.

"I know, Desmond, that I could lead a good and holy life as your wife, but when God has done so much for me, shall I not make a sacrifice for His dear sake? And so, though I know I am going to hurt you, still you must forgive me and pray for me. Desmond, this is to be our farewell. In this world we may not meet again."

Desmond O'Neil sprang to his feet with a hoarse exclamation.

"Rose!" he cried, "are you mad? For God's sake tell me that you don't mean what you have said!"

"Ah! but I do mean it, Desmond. I am going to enter the religious life."

He staggered back as though she had struck him and put out his hand as if to ward off a blow.

"Ah! Desmond, my dearest—for I may call you that just for this once!—don't make it harder for me—and don't think you are any less dear to me or ever, ever will be—only—there is someone else now with a greater claim."

He could not speak but dropped heavily into a chair and covered his face with his hands.

She came to his side and laid her hand on his head softly:

He lifted his face and looked at her, and what she saw in his eyes made her turn her own away.

"Are you fixed in this resolve?" he asked then—and she hardly recognised his voice—"are you sure of yourself, Rose?"

And she answered quietly:

"Quite sure, Desmond."

There was no more to be said—God had spoken—and Desmond felt it—as far as he had any feelings left, for he was a stricken man that day.

He took her hands and raised them to his lips in reverent silence, but she stooped and kissed him on the brow.

"God keep you, dear, and be with you always," she said.

He rose to his feet and went towards the door—groping, like a blind man—and so passed out of her life for ever here below.

A year later Rose entered one of the strictest Orders in

the Church. During that year she had lived quietly in her own home in England, studying and praying, preparing for her novitiate. She never repented of her resolution, but only the dear Lord and herself knew of the hours of agony and temptation through which she sometimes passed. No suffering which our human nature knows is so hard to be borne as that terrible heart-hunger which consumes us when we feel that we would give anything, suffer anything, just for one "touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still."

But we may be sure that God did not leave her comfortless—sure that He repaid a thousandfold any sacrifice she made in His service.

And Desmond O'Neil? The light-hearted Irish boy with the enthusiasm and ideals had gone, never to return, and in his place was the silent, reserved man, that all Limerick learned to know and respect, but also to fear a little. He never got over his early grief, and although as a Catholic he dared not rebel, still there were times when he needed all his faith and devotion, to feel that he did not grudge her to God.

On the morning that she was professed he received a tiny parcel—it was her little rosary of mother-of-pearl, sent to him now that she herself would have the beads of her Order.

A few farewell lines in her own handwriting came also, and he read them over through a mist of tears—tears of which he was not ashamed.

"And so, dear," concluded Mrs. O'Sullivan, "your uncle can never hear that song unmoved—even after all these years."

Moira's tears were falling fast, as she whispered brokenly: "And she?"

"She is in the convent, dear. I hear from her every six months."

"Oh! mother—poor uncle!" And youth looked with sudden wonder and sympathy at the middle-aged man who at that moment stepped back into the room, saying briskly:

"Well! Moira, is the music over? Will you ring for lights?"

His niece rose hastily and left the room to hide her tear-stained face, but his sharp eyes noticed, and he looked inquiringly at his sister.

"I was telling her a story of the past, Desmond," she said softly, and she pointed to the song of "The Rosary" on the open piano.

His glance followed hers, and his face changed and softened wonderfully. But he did not speak, he only stooped and kissed his sister as he said:

"I am going to my study, Mollie, for a little while."

Alone in his study he drew from his waistcoat pocket the little case which contained Rose's beads. He looked at them long and sadly; his lips moved as if in prayer, while he raised the crucifix to his lips.

ANNIE M. SMITHSON.

Father Charles of Mount Argus.

(Died 5th January, 1893.)



Picture of Our Lady over the Altar at which St. Paul of the Cross used to celebrate Mass in SS. John and Paul's, Rome.

ON the 31st July, 1849, two saints bade "farewell till we meet again" to each other at the railway station of Tournai, in Belgium. The one was a worn-out missionary, who on the seven-and-twentieth day of the following month was to consummate the sacrifice that had been provisioned and accepted by him before the Virgin's altar in the Passionist monastery of Paliano, in 1814; the other was in "the morn of youth"

"the unsunned freshness of strength,"

who, too, longed for sacrifice, but whose Golgotha was eventually less rugged and steep than had been the older man's. They were Venerable Dominic of the Mother of God, and he who was afterwards known as Father Charles of Mount Argus.

As saintly souls and members of the same Order, these two, of course, had much in common. But more. The younger man had been moulded by his senior, for though Venerable Dominic had gone definitely to England in 1841, he remained Provincial over the Passionist monastery in Belgium till his death, and made his visitation of it every year. Charles's superiors had been Dominic's companions and were imbued with his spirit. Probably, during one of those visits, the young man, aglow with zeal, had offered himself for our new English mission; and Dominic would have fostered the wish, for he knew Charles's virtue. Even then he was remarkable for his saintliness. One who knew him in those days writes of him: "I lived with Father Charles for two years at our house in Ere, near Tournai: he was then a student. I was

much edified by his holiness of life. He was a most exemplary religious, exact in the observance of our Holy Rule, simple and gentle in his manner, and full of faith and devotion. No one could help noticing, even at this early period of his life, that he possessed the virtue of Faith in an eminent degree." Venerable Dominic, about this very time, wrote to the Father General of the Passionists for missionaries for England. "Send me labourers," he asked, "but labourers who are prepared to suffer much, to be laughed at, and despised, for there is no stint in the quantity of sufferings, derisions, and mockeries which are to be had here." Charles, in the Servant of God's judgment, would be just such a labourer. Men as he could bear with equanimity the brutal insult or biting taunt of the English *canaille*, to which Dominic and his companions were hourly subjected in those early days of England's "Second Spring" of Catholicity.

Whether the outcome of a promise to Ven. Dominic or not, Father Charles came to England in 1851. Father Ignatius Spencer was then Provincial, and he sent him first to Aston, and shortly afterwards to St. Wilfrid's, Cotton Hall, in Staffordshire. There was an extensive parish attached to St. Wilfrid's, and Father Charles threw himself into parochial work with the fire of an Apostle. "He used to walk for miles through the district," records a brother-priest, "visiting the homes of the Catholics, and trying to bring back those who had fallen away from the practice of their religion. His patience and perseverance in dealing with obstinate cases showed how he ever kept before him the truth of how precious even one soul is in the sight of God." He preached, and confessed, and catechised. St. Jane Frances de Chantal said of St. Francis de Sales that "Zeal for the salvation of souls was his predominant passion." Without doubt, the same could be said of every holy soul, for zeal is the outcome of love. "If you love God, draw all to the love of God," urges St. Augustine. One knowing Father Charles's work for six-and-thirty years at Mount Argus would unhesitatingly say that zeal for souls was with him, too, "a passion."

In 1857, his Provincial sent him to Ireland, and here properly his life-work was done. He had learned to love the Irish people whilst stationed at Aston, in Staffordshire, where there was a small colony of them; and this love grew apace in Ireland till it was second only to his love of God. How often we who knew him heard him speak of the Irish as "my people," or as "our dear good people." Ireland, in the seventh century, gave St. Livinius as Apostle to Father Charles's native land, and it seems as though this saintly Dutch Passionist were sent to us to pay back in part the debt that Holland owed to Ireland. He had "volunteered" for our mission in England—we had no house in Ireland till 1856; but God willed it otherwise. His beautiful life was to be spent amongst us. And in coming to Ireland he was spared many of the rude and bitter trials that Ven. Dominic suffered in England. It would be as difficult to imagine Father

Charles in an English setting as a saint of the type of Francis of Assisi, or Antony of Padua, or Benedict Labre. He worked assiduously and with zeal while at Aston and Cotton Hall, and doubtless, was regarded as a holy priest by the good English Catholics of those places, yet they could never have understood him. Could the following scene have had its *locale* at Euston or New Street station? An eye-witness tells how one summer evening at Westland Row station, the



FATHER CHARLES, C.P.

people recognising the well-known features of the venerable Passionist amongst the crowd of passengers, regardless of the place knelt around him and demanded his blessing!

Ven. Dominic and he had a different work to do in God's vineyard, and He gave them the qualities and characteristics suitable to their part. Dominic sowed the seeds, the fruits of which others are gathering to-day in England. Charles was one of the many saintly reapers of the harvest which St. Patrick and the Irish priesthood had sown. Dominic was militant, a preacher, theologian, philosopher, linguist; Charles was retiring, never thoroughly mastered the language

of his adopted country, and preached rather by his holiness of life and by his miracles than by word of mouth.

As one looked at Father Charles's mortified countenance with his "down-dropt" eyes—one rarely saw his eyes, which were hazel-coloured, and clear

"With the clear-pointed flame of chastity"—

and knowing his life of constant prayer and selflessness, one thought of him as a victim of Divine Love. For God's dear sake he left a happy home, a loved mother and brothers and sisters, and country, and spent his life only with and for God. Though we all loved and revered him, he had no intimate friend amongst us. He looked "lonely," though in truth he was not so, for Christ was his close friend. He was a "foreigner" too. To no one whom I have known do the following lines apply so fitly as to him after death:—

By foreign hands thy dying eyes were closed;
By foreign hands thy decent limbs composed;
By foreign hands thy humble grave adorned;
By strangers honoured and by strangers mourned.

One associated him with the text of the Apostle Paul: "Ye are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ."

To live in the same house with Father Charles was to be constantly reminded by his very bearing of what religious deportment should be; to assist at his Mass, and see his tears, was to have the veil of familiarity drawn aside, and the awfulness of the Divine Sacrifice revealed; to know his sanctity, and yet hear him repeat time and again: "After all my Masses and confessions, I am full of sin," brought the virtue of humility home to us. How patient he was! Never a word of complaint passed his lips, though for a long time before his death, according to his physician, he must have suffered intensely. Even on the very night on which he was seized by his last illness, when a religious, seeing that something was wrong, asked him if he were suffering, he answered, "It is merely an accident." It was only when he was stricken down that his brethren realized to what an extent his frame had been reduced by half-a-century's self-denial. He had no thought of self. He had given his life to God, to his Order, to the people who came to him. "He lived," wrote a learned Jesuit of him, "in a sphere of thought in which God is everything, and the passing interests of time dwindle to insignificance." He never read a newspaper nor enquired about worldly or political affairs. The phrase, "in the world but not of the world," could be applied to him in very truth.

The world forsaken, all its busy cares

And stirring interests shunned with desperate flight.

His holiness was proved by his miracles, too. True, it is not in the gift of miraculous power that the highest form of God's favour is shown, for this gift is given, not for the benefit of him by whom the miracle is wrought, but for the good of others. Yet the instruments that God chooses to perform His miracles are generally—indeed, are almost always—holy souls. In the "Life of Father Charles," written

by one of our Fathers, there are nine authenticated miracles recorded to have been worked by him. Father William Morris writes of St. Patrick: "We are not surprised that God should give power over nature to a man who had such power over himself, and we are therefore prepared for the statement that the working of miracles was of almost daily occurrence with him, that he gave sight to the blind and speech to the dumb, and cured all manner of diseases." This extract could be applied to Father Charles. He was a "miracle-worker," but would have been the last to think of himself as such. Words of praise he held in horror. Many of the saints spoke freely of the favours which the Lord had bestowed on them. One of the latest candidates for canonization, the "Little Flower," tells us in her autobiography the "great things" done to her by the Most High. If Father Charles ever spoke of those that God did to him, it was only to his confessor. One thinks of him in his wondrous humility: After all my Masses and Confessions, I am full of sin." But the multitudes that came from far and near to ask his counsel or seek his intercession with God regarded him as a saint. And *vox populi vox Dei*.

He lived for God and for His people. He filled hearts that had been crushed or pierced by sorrow with joy; he cured the blind and the lame and the maimed; he brought back sinners to the Sacred Feet of the Crucified One; he went before his religious brethren by holy example; and when on the morning of the Vigil of the Epiphany, 1893, the news went forth that he was dead, thousands of Irish hearts mourned him.

His body, strangely flexible after death, was laid to rest in the little God's Acre of Mount Argus under the shadow of the huge Celtic cross there: he lies in the land of the people whom he loved so well, and for whom he worked so gladly. If in time he be canonized—the process will soon be begun—that grave will be a place of pilgrimage for the Irish people, and he will be, in truth, save in birth as was Patrick, an Irish saint.

OSWALD DONNELLY, C.P.

Stars of Bethlehem.

"Every joy, every sorrow, is a star leading us to Jesus."
(Faber.)

When spring from winter's grip unbinds the earth,
All through the meadows free the freshets run;
Beneath the hedgerows struggle to the birth
The first faint flowerets, straining to the sun.

So when awakes in hearts the spring of God,
The duties, joys and sorrows of each day,
Along the broken edges of life's road,
Like stars of Bethlehem strew all the way.

MOTHER ST. JEROME.

An Optimist.

IN an unthinking moment you would probably agree that of all men the one you least wish to meet is the individual who is always pouring his woes and his fears into your ears. Your declared optimist, however, is often a more wearisome soul. I mean the one who publishes eternally the fact that he is personally optimistic—who is always pointing out to you the scores of bright spots which he never fails to discern behind the frownings of his own particular and insignificant black clouds. I once read an article by a popular author, and have never regained my original regard for him, for the opening sentence of his article was: "I am an Optimist!"

Felim Hennessy was not an optimist of the bombastic type. As a matter of fact, if you applied the term "optimist" to him, the chances are a thousand to one that he would enquire what nickname it was exactly you were calling him. He was what he called "next door to eighty years"—though he scarcely looked sixty-five, and dwelt on a Connaught hill-side in a neat cottage familiar with content and calmness, if not with curtains or carpets. The snows of many winters had left but slight markings on his features, for he never forgot the summer's sun was always in the offing—the cares of life but lightly furrowed his brow, for he perpetually remembered that even the most roughly ploughed field can be smoothed by the aid of harrow and roller. He would have agreed with Shelley that,

March with grief doth howl and rage,
And April weeps—but, O, ye hours,
Follow with May's fairest flowers.

Perhaps some of Felim's optimism might be due to hereditary causes, for he liked occasionally to repeat this little tale:

"It's as clear as daylight I remember to hear me father, an' I only a bit o' a ladeen, tellin' how he read once o' a man was workin' in one o' them gold-fields, an' how he kept diggin' for days an' weeks an' not a bit o' gold could he find. All round him the other men was meetin' with some share or other o' luck, an' so this particular man he gev up in disgust, an' started off to a new spot an' began to dig a fresh openin'. Well, what do you think, but another boyo came an' went to work in the spot where the poor man had spent so many fruitless days, an' lo! an' behold you, it wasn't evenin' before he got a lad o' a nugget would make a tidy fortune for a person. So the poor man that gev up hope was nicely jockeyed to see all his labour goin' to the benefit o' another, for to be sure when he left his spot he had no further claim on it. As me poor father used to say, the first digger had no right to stop till he aither got the gold or was too tired

to go any further, an' he couldn't be too tired when he could begin in the fresh place. When you begin a thing, aither finish it out, or give up your gun when you cannot carry it any more. You might as well not start a journey at all as to go only nine-tenths o' the way."

Felim knew nothing—in the bookish sense that is—of the so-called philosophy of life, but he had the optimism of the Celt, and that goodly brand of it possessed by the Connaught folk in particular. It was not an optimism founded on conscious reasoning so much as an innate knowledge that the Creator of all things worked on a plan of which only full knowledge could ensure complete appreciation. If Felim knew that continuous failure disheartens, he was likewise aware that perpetual success cloyes after a time.

"Some people fancies," he remarked once, "that they'd be as happy as a wasp on a plate o' jam if they only had all the money they'd like, an' others agin thinks it's only bein' able to look down on a dale o' people under them that's the why an' the wherefore o' happiness in this world. Well, I read one time o' a man who owned a sight o' race-horses, an' good race-horses at that—for one o' them was never known to be anywhere but first past the winnin'-post in a race. He was getherin' up a horrid power o' money be his winnin's, but somehow he wasn't quite satisfied. Then one day he ses to a friend o' his, 'Do you know,' ses he, 'do you know, I'd like to see someone else's horse win a race from one o' mine—just for a change.' That's the way the world goes—people always wantin' a change, always wantin' to have things the other way to what they are. An' about thinkin' you're better nor other people—sure there's bound to be some that can't have anyone to look down on, an' are they to be always miserable? No, as I always say, don't mind lookin' down on others, don't mind how others look in your eyes, but do mind how you look to them, an' chief o' all mind how you look to yourself. There was a great man once, a Saint if I don't disremember, an' he used to tell people not to mind lookin' out, always for them to look in, to look at themselves. If y'are plased at what you see inside yourself you won't care a button at what anyone else can see on the outside o' you."

While Felim believed in the virtue of cheerfulness he was not an adherent of the somewhat insane "cheerfulness at any price" doctrine. Less than half a mile from his dwelling lived a man whose two daughters were drowned as a result of the *Lusitania* outrage. Felim was relating the facts of the case to me:

"As I say, there's exceptions to every rule. Look at that poor man now, an' wasn't it the glum news he got o' a fine sunny mornin' that his two little girleens was at the bottom o' the sea be the dastrous work o' them Germanic monsters. A neighbourin' man it was came with the news that the vessel was drowned, an' the poor man couldn't get before him till he had gone in an' told the story to his wife word for word

as the postman had brought it from the village that mornin'. Well, there came a sort o' a quare look in the woman's eyes, an' she gev a kind o' a moan, an' the next story was that we were wakin' her that night. Now, I don't believe in anyone sayin' an ill word o' another, but wouldn't it be askin' that poor man to be so unnatural as not to be human if he didn't, and if he doesn't to this day, think terrible things when he dwells on that? That was such a thing in life as didn't happen ever before, an' we hope never will again, an' I say that it's a happenin' like that only would forgive a man from the effects o' what he might say. But to be sure, after all, even if bad words break no bones, naither do they cure any."

One of the favourite mottoes of Felim was. "Never say you're bet till you can't say it," which conveyed the idea that while there's speech there's hope. Another was, "The knock-out blow is the best blow a man can get—sometimes." Still he was not a believer in living by rules, and the grumblers were far from irritating him, for like your true optimist he admitted to each man the right to his own views.

"There's a power o' people in this world now, an' they spend their time thinkin' how much better things would be done if only they had the managin' o' them. Anything from pollytics to doctorin' they'd like to have a hand in, an' 'tis far from slow they are to point out the flaws in the doin's o' anyone but themselves. Though if it came to a matter o' givin' sound advice or a useful direction I'd nearly bet me buttons the greatest criticiser wouldn't have the most good sense to give.

"People settin' up to be always foretelling bad happenin's is another class that should get back sates only. The man who prophesies evil is the safest prophet, for if things do go wrong everyone says what a great foresight he had, but if matters turn out as well as could be expected, then the foreteller o' disaster won't forget to chirp in an' say how it was that he was only puttin' people on their guard, an' that only for he did prophecy a bad result they would be so careless that they would make a mess o' things without any manner o' doubt. Let a man get credit for doin' his best in any condition o' work or exertion—no matter whether his best is as good as the next man's or not. The case that looks bad to-day may look all right to-morrow, just the same as a butterfly has to pass through a stage o' ugliness before she can clap her wings with all their colours to the sun.

"Another quare thing is the way people say things to be good or bad when they should know that what's good for the tailor or the shopkeeper wouldn't be so good for the undertaker. When there comes a wet day they'll say to you, 'Isn't this a bad day we have?' forgettin' that the rain is as needful as the sunshine, an' if the weather kept dry for a long time 'twould be as truthful to call aich dry day further a 'bad day!' People is too much inclined to judge things from how they affect them at the minit an' not from how they will appear to them when judged be their result at the finish.

"I heard a story one time o' a man was bein' tried for some bad doin' or other an' the evidence agin him was as solid an' as ugly as you could see. Well, when it was all said out the judge asked the man that was bein' tried if he had anything to say agin what was all before them. 'No, your honour,' ses he, 'I'll lave me case in the hands o' the twelve dacent men above there an' me sentencin' in your own.' That's just the way some people talk about things that are as little in their power as the passin' o' his own sentence was in that poor man's. They lave things to come in the hands o' Providence with a sort o' an air that as good as ses that they are half doubtful if it wouldn't be better for them to take the arrangin' o' the future into their own hands. And when things don't turn out exactly as they expect, they'd lade you to believe that it was just only to spite themselves they were made to work different.

"A man startin' off to build a house will, if he knows his business, be able to tell you what it will look like when it's finished, for it's only the botches that think o' how they will manage things as they go along. An' so it's with the affairs o' this world that happen to aich an' every one o' us. The plan is all arranged, an' we should be prepared to take things as they come, an' that not only for the raison that no matter how we complain it won't make a bit o' differ to the outcome o' the matter. If we see that everything is done for our good we will be prepared to take the rough with the smooth, an' we will know in time that the things that's smoothest to-day was roughest not so long ago.

"When thinkin' o' things to come a man should have a sort o' a scales in his mind an' think that into one side will go all the trouble he will meet with, an' into the other all the things which will lighten his misfortunes, such as good temper, cheerfulness, silence under trouble, and a wish to take everything for the best. For a man must put something into the scales every time he thinks or does anything, an' if he doesn't put it into the side that lightens his own load in the world, then he must put it into the other side. . . .

"Did you ever see how a boxer that loses his temper gets a dale more blows nor the one that keeps cool. You'd wonder what it was he expected to get in the ring—if not blows. It's just the same with the world, bad humour and cantankerousness sort o' attracts trouble. An' did you ever notice, too, that the crowd that hisses a lad o' a boxer that can't take his punchin' as if it didn't surprise an' discourage him is always ready to cheer the lad that can keep a smile next-door to a broken nose? Somehow it's like that all through the world—what we get doesn't matter so much as the way we take it. An' the glad way is always better nor the sad way."

THOMAS KELLY.

The Star of Bethlehem.

*Star of both sinful and saintly,
Of the child and the stricken in years,
Hope of the heart beating faintly,
Light of eyes blinded by tears.*

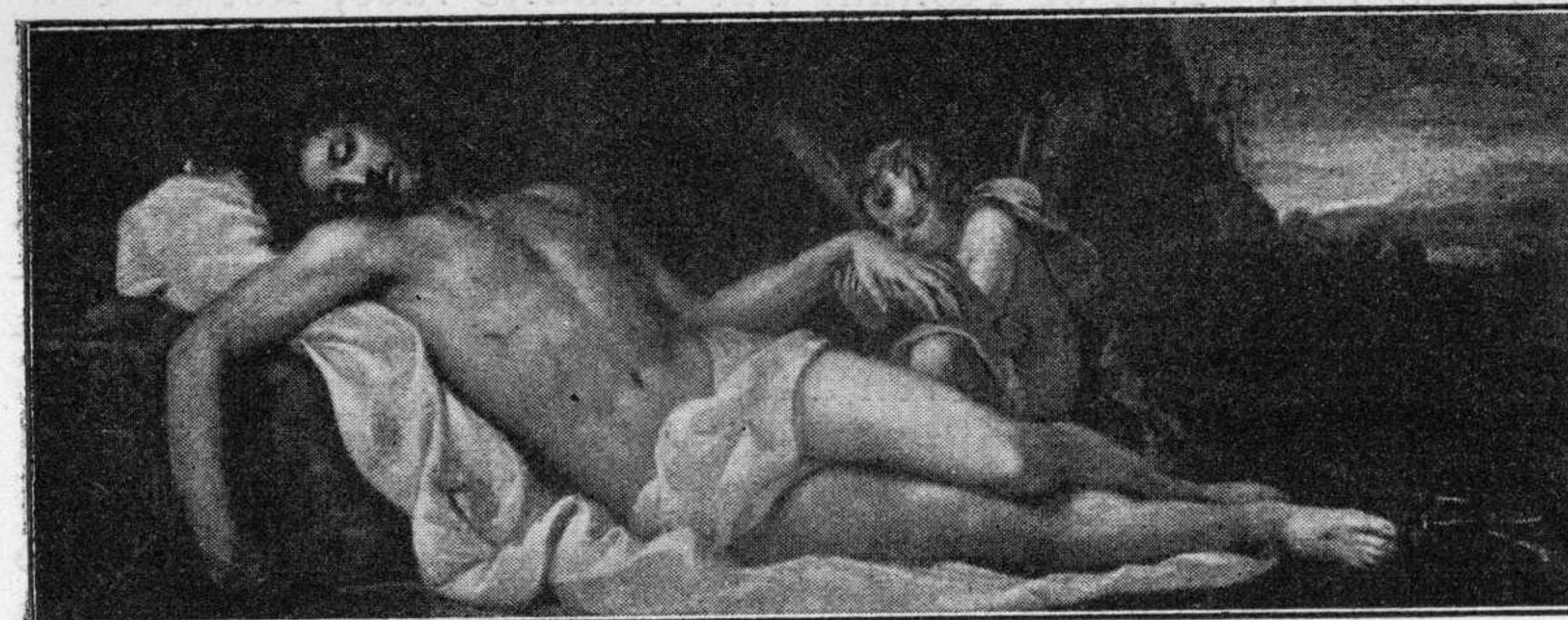
The Star of the Ages, holy,
It rose in its shining mild,
And led where unwelcomed and lowly
The Hope of the Ages smiled.
Was it to earth a stranger
Till the Magi followed its rays,
Till it rested above the manger
Where He lay whom angels praise?
Still clearly through darkened ages—
'Mid wars and oppressions, mild,
Martyrs and heroes and sages
It guided to Mary's Child.

*Star of both sinful and saintly,
Of the child and the stricken in years,
Hope of the heart beating faintly,
Light of eyes blinded by tears.*

And each passing Christmas morning
We may follow its shining mild
Past coldness and doubt and scorning
To the cradle of Mary's Child.
It shines in the heavens eternal
For those who have eyes of faith,
Steadfast, alluring, supernal,
"Come to the Child," it saith.
Ever the chorus of angels
Is heard in the heart of a child,
And the words of the true Evangelists
Are known to the unbeguiled:
"Glory to God in the highest:
Peace and goodwill to men."
And for us both furthest and nighest
Shineth the star as then.

*Star of both sinful and saintly,
Of the child and the stricken in years,
Hope of the heart beating faintly,
Light of eyes blinded by tears.*

JESSIE A. ANDERSON.



The Highway of the Cross.

VIII. THE LITHOSTROTOS.

THE inspired narrative of our Lord's Passion as traced in the gospels clearly supposes that the prætorium, or audience-hall of the ancient palace-fortress, now called Antonia, which Pontius Pilate made his residence when he came up to Jerusalem from Cæsarea, opened on to a paved public space. For he is described as going in and out so frequently that it seems he had only a few steps to take from one to the other. This place was called Gabbatha, or the high place, from its situation; also, Lithostrotos, or the stone-strewn, from the large red-tinted stones that paved it. It was evidently outside the precincts of the Governor's residence, for the Jews did not fear to crowd into it while they would not set foot in the prætorium lest they should be legally defiled. In it was the Bema, or raised platform, with the Sella, the chair from which the Roman magistrate gave judgment. On this morning, being the sixth day of the week and the fifteenth of the moon, or month, Nisan, being also the eve of the great Sabbath, *i.e.*, the Sabbath within the octave of the Pasch, the Lithostrotos was filled with a crowd of the lowest of the populace, suborned by the enemies of our Lord relentlessly to seek His death. They may have been only a few, and these chiefly servants and dependents of the Sanhedrin, when they left the house of Caiphas, but a moving crowd, like a running stream, ever gathers fresh forces, and now they were a large, unruly, and savage mob whose rage rose higher and fiercer at each effort of Pilate for release, and at last by menace to himself forced him to surrender.

Pilate did not fear the violence of the crowd, for he had a whole cohort with him, six hundred armed and disciplined soldiers under their centurions and tribune, but he feared for

his position. Not of Roman but Samnite race, not of consular but only equestrian rank, he had succeeded in pushing his way to high position, and he knew that it now needed all his cleverness to keep it. Twice by the display of pagan emblems he had grievously wounded the religious feelings of the Jews; twice there had been bloodshed in Jerusalem; already he had been reprimanded by the emperor; another conflict with the populace, even another riot, might cost him the Procuratorship, and ruin his career. On the other hand, his sense of justice, and of his position as representative of Rome, his dislike for the Jews, his clear perception of the jealousy and malice of their leaders, his pity for the suffering and friendless prisoner, the loss of dignity before the soldiers and their officers if he now condemned to death a man whom he had twice declared innocent, all these forbade him to yield to any popular clamour. He must then speak them fair and appease their anger; then find some means to release the prophet of Nazareth: but at all costs any public disturbance must be avoided.

He therefore again left his apartments, and passing through the *prætorium*, crossed its threshold to meet the Sanhedrin deputation. The company of soldiers who had formed the escort to Herod would salute him, and as he turned to acknowledge he must have noted the contrast between their dark tunics and iron breast-plates and the robe of shining white that now covered the torn garments and drooping figure of their prisoner. Then he moved towards the accusers, and strove to reason with them. They had brought this man before him as one "that perverteth" the people, that he had already that morning examined him and had failed to find any foundation for this accusation or any "cause of death," that he had sent him to Herod as he was really his subject, and his public career had been passed in that prince's dominions; that Herod also had been unable to find any cause for his condemnation: both civil authorities had therefore dismissed the case. But since the prisoner had given offence to the religious rulers and the people and was the occasion of this trouble, he would inflict some punishment, and then they would let him go. The silence, angry and ominous, with which his suggestion was received told him at once that he had failed, and that they would still cling to their demand for the death sentence.

Then he bethought him of another expedient. There was a custom that at their national festival the people should ask and claim the release of some prisoner condemned to death, themselves to chose who it should be. Whether it was of great antiquity and established in memory of their deliverance from Egypt, or lately introduced by the Roman governors, is uncertain. But the people highly valued it, and Pilate had followed it in previous years. Suppressing all trace of irritation, he now invited them to use their privilege, in the hope of thus escaping from his own predicament. "But you have a custom that I should release one unto you at the Pasch. Whom will you that I release unto you,

Barabbas, or Jesus that is called the Christ?" He would not give them the choice of any prisoner, or one out of several, but only of one of two; Barabbas or Christ. We are told that Barabbas was a "notorious" prisoner and "a murderer." The name rather startles—Bar-Abbas, the son of the father; for our Lord in His preaching had spoken of His Father.

Whilst waiting for answer from the crowd, and trusting that his device would succeed, Pilate, in order to give due formality to the sentence of acquittal and release of our Lord, ascends the platform and seats himself on the magisterial chair. There is comparative silence in the square; only the faint noise of shuffling feet and hushed voices as the priests and scribes move among the people telling them that the Procurator in a few moments will ask their decision, and urging them to be insistent in calling for Barabbas.

Pilate sits motionless and silent. He has no assistants as assessors, or lictors with the fasces, no robes of consul or chair of ivory and gold, he is simply governor of a province with specially deputed power of life and death. He would wear the white-edged purple toga of a magistrate. The platform would have some balustrade on which to rest arm or hand. While he sits musing, there is brought him an urgent message from his wife. "Have thou nothing to do with this just man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." Claudia Procula was a lady whose family, as we gather from her first name, was connected with that of the reigning emperor, Tiberius. As was not infrequent among the Roman nobility of the time, she was a Proselyte of the Gate, *i.e.*, a convert to Judaism, though not bound to all the observances or possessing all the privileges of the Law. There is nothing to show whether she had been converted in Rome, where the Jews were a large and influential community, or at Cæsarea, where she had now lived several years. She had heard of the preaching of the Baptist, its spirit of penance and expectancy; of the preaching and miracles of the prophet of Nazareth. Her devotion explains her presence at Jerusalem during the Pasch. The excommunication and expected arrest of our Lord must have come to her knowledge, and her mind filled with dark misgivings. SS. Ambrose and John Chrysostom are of opinion that her dream was divinely sent, others that it was but the natural consequence of her unrest. In any case it is the first help rendered our Lord in His Passion. Of men, His enemies are triumphant, His friends have abandoned Him; the attempt to save, the cry for pause, the first solace to His Sacred Heart, are from a woman; a spring of loving pity that will grow yet fuller in His Passion, and thence flow over the long life of His Church.*

For yet some minutes Pilate sits silent, holding the waxen tablet in his hand, his eyes resting on the message which

* The Menology of the Greeks places Claudia Procula among the saints on the 27th October.

brings strength to his purpose and seems to make sure his hope. Then he raises his head and surveys the crowd, eager, expectant, a cry upon their lips. He addresses them: "Whom will you that I release unto you, Barabbas, or Jesus that is called Christ?" At a sign from him the soldiers stand somewhat apart that our Lord may be clearly in view. His exhausted and trembling frame, His white and cruelly stained face, His bowed head and dishevelled hair, His torn garment and the mockery of the shining robe plead in vain.

The whole multitude cry out, saying, "Away with this man and release unto us Barabbas."

Astonished and dismayed he can only repeat his question; they in answer raise higher the cry for Barabbas.

Baffled now and angry, Pilate says ironically, "What will you then that I do to the King of the Jews?"

They startle him with the demand, "Crucify him!"

Then the conscience and honour of the man rise to the conflict.

"Why, what evil hath he done?"

But the crowd insist the more, "Let him be crucified."

As he sees the exultant looks of the leaders and hears the furious shout of the crowd, he begins to fathom the depths of their hatred. He knows that their punishment for blasphemy, the present accusation, is stoning to death; that if he consent for them to proceed according to their law, they would not be satisfied. It would not content them that the prophet of Nazareth be stoned to death in some obscure ditch outside the walls. They want him nailed to a gibbet, raised up, smitten by heaven and reviled by earth, with his face to the light that they may see him bleed and shrink, and faint and die. "Let him be crucified."

The storm rises higher and louder till it surges over and sweeps away Pilate's failing resolution. He will not even now pronounce the definite sentence. He signifies that our Lord be scourged. The Jews will look upon it as a preliminary to crucifixion ("præparatio ad crucem"); or, he catches at the hope, it may move them to relent.

In scornful rage he orders an attendant to bring laver and water, and as the water is poured over his hands he says loudly, "I am innocent of the blood of this just man; look you to it."

They accept his disclaimer, and take the guilt. "His blood be upon us and our children."

Pilate may wash his hands, but he cannot cleanse his soul. So everlasting infamy lies on him, and Jerusalem was laid in ruin.

PLACID WAREING, C.P.

The Owner of Gorreston Hall.

"Transit gloria mundi, fides Catholica manet."

BY FELICIA CURTIS.

Author of "*Under the Rose*," "*In the Lean Years*," "*Near Neighbours*," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XV.—(continued.)

So the days passed, and with the passing of each day the invalid grew weaker, until even Mrs. Trevyck realised that the "effort" she was always urging him to make would never be made. He would have no stranger about him; his son and daughter, with Hicks and Rosalie, watched and tended him, and, with the unconscious selfishness of the very sick, Mr. Trevyck did not guess the strain he was putting on those about him.

It was an intensely hot night at the end of August. The doctor had been and gone—he paid two visits daily now—and Jemima was alone with her father; Leo, wrapped in a rug, lying asleep on a couch in the adjoining room.

"Jemima!"

She went quickly to the bedside. Her father raised himself painfully on his pillows, looking round the room with terrified eyes. He caught her wrist, saying eagerly:

"Why are all these strange people in the room? What are they? Why are they here?"

"There is no one but myself in the room with you, father; it is the flickering shadows made by the lamplight."

The terror did not leave the anxious eyes peering into the space beyond the girl.

"They are waiting, waiting! Tell me, Jemima, am I already dead?"

"No, dear father, no. What you see are merely shadows. Let me light the candles and they will disappear."

He lay back exhausted on the pillows. Jemima's hand trembled as she lit the many candles in the sconces on the walls, filling the room with light.

"Now!" she said, forcing herself to speak cheerfully as she came back to the bedside, "all the shadows have gone, haven't they?"

"Give me your hand; let me feel something warm and living near me."

His daughter's heart was sick with dread, though she smiled at him as she slipped her hand into his, but his eyes were still staring beyond her out into the room.

"Do you know what Rosalie said to me when she was watching beside me while you slept?" he asked presently.

"No."

"She wanted me to see a priest. Wanted *me!*"

"Would you like to see a priest, father?"

"Why should I? Why do you ask me such a question?"

Jemima could not have said why she had asked; she remained silent. Then she heard a slight movement behind the great screen of gilded leather that stood before the open door. She withdrew her hand from her father's clasp as he lay back with closed eyes, apparently unconscious that his question remained unanswered, and passing round the screen saw Peter Bretton standing there. He made her a sign to come into the corridor.

"Mr. Trevyck is very ill to-night, is he not?" he asked.

Jemima nodded assent; she could not trust herself to speak.

"Sometimes," said Bretton hurriedly, yet choosing his words with care, "when a man is very ill he changes his opinion about many things. If Mr. Trevyck should wish to see a priest"—he watched her face closely as he spoke for any trace of resentment at the suggestion—"there is one staying with me at the Green Lodge. I could bring him at any moment."

"Thank you, thank you very much; it is kind of you. I have asked my father whether he wished to see a priest."

Bretton did not allow the surprise he felt at this statement to appear. He waited in silence.

"I will ask him again." She made a little sign of farewell and turned back into the room.

She heard Leo stirring presently, and in another minute he came into the room.

"Go and rest, dear," he said affectionately, looking at her white face, but she shook her head.

"I can't, Leo."

The night wore on; the faint stir of the coming dawn was in the air when suddenly Mr. Trevyck's voice rang out clearly through the silence:

"Leo!"

The two were beside him at once. He was sitting up, his face grey and drawn, great drops standing on his forehead.

"What is it, father?" Leo took his hands in his.

"Tell me the truth. Am I dying?"

There was a moment's pause, then Leo said quietly:

"I do not know, father."

The haggard, terrified eyes looked from one to the other. Jemima felt almost beside herself.

"Father, dear father!" she cried, "you have so often told me that there is nothing to fear in death. You are not afraid, are you?"

"Afraid?" he muttered. "Not afraid of the blackness of an eternal night?"

"Father! There is a priest staying with Mr. Bretton at the Green Lodge; he would be able perhaps to say something—I don't know what, but he might—that would help you. Let me send for him," cried Jemima, while Leo looked at her in amazement.

"A priest? What was it laughed? Who is in the room?"

"Only ourselves."

He sank back on the pillows, looking from one to the other.

"I have told you often"—the words came at intervals, faint and gasping—"that there is no God."

There was a silence, while the first rose-tints of day mingled with the light of the candles. Leo went hurriedly to the door. Jemima knew that Bretton was waiting there. She heard his quick steps go down the corridor as Leo returned.

"I have sent for the priest," he whispered.

The dying man stirred, raised himself on his elbow, and looked from one to the other.

"I have told you often that there is no God," he repeated, as though no interval had passed since he had last spoken; "now, as I go into a horror of everlasting night, I tell you that I know that there is a God, and I——"

He fell back dead as the swift footsteps of the priest sounded in the corridor.

CHAPTER XVI.

"There must be a strain of insanity in the family somewhere," said Lady Gorreston, resignedly, looking at her two grandsons in a meditative manner; "it is not on *my* side of the house, so it must come from the Gorrestons, though your father and grandfather were about the sanest persons I have ever known, my dear John."

John laughed good-humouredly. He and Leo were in attendance on the old lady, sitting at tea in the Gorreston big drawing-room, in the waning light of the October afternoon.

"How you can laugh passes my comprehension, John. How you can reconcile your conduct with a sense of your responsibilities is also a matter beyond my understanding. With everything in the world to make life attractive, you go and throw away all your advantages in order to shave your head and go without shoes and stockings."

"Impressive though those items of the religious life may be, they are not my only inducements to enter it," replied John, with a twinkle of mirth in his eyes.

"Religious, indeed! A man can be religious without making a disgusting object of himself."

"Undoubtedly. I sincerely hope that disgust may not be the chief sentiment I shall inspire in my surroundings."

"I could have borne you—and Leo also, who ought to have known better than to have been weak enough to follow your example—becoming Roman Catholics; but a monk!"

"Well, granny, I like to do things thoroughly," returned John. "You know you have always advised thoroughness."

"When I last saw Peter Bretton I told him very plainly what I thought of the part he has played in the matter," said Lady Gorreston with emphasis.

"He didn't play any part at all, beyond setting a good example. 'Example is better than precept.' See copybook," put in Leo, from his seat on a footstool beside the old lady. "Have some more muffin, granny."

"How did Bretton take your lecture?" asked John, with some curiosity.

"Lecture, indeed! The lecturing was all on his side, if you please," replied the old lady, whereupon Leo rolled over upon the hearthrug in a very ecstasy of enjoyment.

There was a prodigious rustling of silken linings, and Mrs. Trevyck came into the room. Lady Gorreston eyed her daughter with disapprobation, mentally remarking that "Selina is more artificial than ever." Art rendered lavish assistance to Nature in those early days of Mrs. Trevyck's widowhood.

Jemima followed her mother into the room, and the conversation became general. The girl had a rather strained and weary look. She had lost much of her bright colour, and her movements were listless. Even Leo's nonsense failed to get more than a wan little smile from her.

"When do you go to Cappella, granny?" asked John presently.

"At the end of the week," returned the old lady. "How I shall like Christmas in hot sunshine and with orange-trees in full bloom I don't know. It is subversive of all my ideas as to the fitness of things."

"If only I were not so sensitive; but—the associations——" Mrs. Trevyck drew out her handkerchief.

Lady Gorreston coughed significantly.

"I am quite ready and very much pleased to look after my granddaughter," she said, smiling at the girl; "and you know very well, Selina, that it is not a matter of sentiment with you, but that you wish to accept the Newtons' invitation."

Mrs. Trevyck made a semi-indignant murmur of protest, but she was no match for her mother in an altercation, and she knew it.

"We shall be a nice little party," went on Lady Gorreston.

"I am glad that you have condescended to spend Christmas with us in a rational manner, John, before making an object of yourself."

That young man laughed good-temperedly.

"What the Newtons will say about Leo's change of religion I cannot imagine," observed Mrs. Trevyck.

"I have not changed my religion, mother. You can tell them so if they make any remarks. I was without a religion of any kind until I became a Catholic."

Jemima looked at her brother wistfully. Only she knew what the horror of his father's death had been to him, but outwardly the young man was his old merry self, though there was a subtle difference in his cheerfulness; it was less on the surface than it had formerly been. He looked out on life with happier eyes.

The fact of the broken engagement had been communicated

to Jemima, together with the information—Teresa being the correspondent—that Mr. Varney had taken a house in their neighbourhood, and was "very attentive" to herself. Jemima had attached no importance to either item of news; Teresa usually mentioned "attentions" from somebody or other in a letter.

"I heard from Clare this morning," said Lady Gorreston presently. "Did you have a letter, Selina? Clare said her mother was writing to you."

"No."

"Well, I may as well give you the news, then. Clare is engaged to that Mr. Varney, that rich vulgarian who has been staying occasionally with the Newtons. He has taken a house in the place."

"You mean *the* Mr. Varney?" asked Mrs. Trevyck, with interest.

"The millionaire. So Clare will have all she wishes. She is a calculating, worldly-minded young woman. It must have been with an eye to this chance that she threw over Peter Bretton, though I must say that, from my observation of Peter's conduct towards her, I thought he was quite aware of the mistake he had made in entering into that engagement."

"He that is not married doeth better," from Leo, sententiously.

"Do not misquote Scripture, Leo, and do not talk nonsense," said his grandmother severely. "If your cousin John likes to abjure matrimony and make a guy of himself, other people may possibly be wiser."

"But, granny, I join John in his abjuration."

"Fiddlesticks! I have no patience with you young men! We shall see you fall in love with some nice girl."

"Never," laughed her grandson; but he did not argue the matter with the old lady.

Mrs. Trevyck and Jemima had arrived on the preceding night. On the following morning John Gorreston said as they were sitting at breakfast:

"I want you to devote all the morning to me, Jemima, will you?"

"Yes. What do you want me to do?"

"I want to take you all over the Hall, and then into the grounds. I want to show you the improvements that are going on."

"And much good improvements will be when the master of the place is going to turn into a hermit, or friar, or something equally useless," from Lady Gorreston, who lost no opportunity of stating her opinion on that subject.

"I'll come too," said Leo affably.

"No, you will not. I want Jemima all to myself," asserted his cousin.

The two went off together and made an exhaustive inspection of the huge old building. Jemima was a little surprised to find that her opinion was asked by Gorreston's owner on every addition or alteration that he contemplated making; she

was still more surprised when, upon saying that a certain favourite room would be in her opinion improved by the addition of a third window, her cousin noted down the suggestion in his pocket-book.

The Elizabeth chamber was in course of transformation, a second room being thrown into it, the third of the suite being intended for a sacristy.

"Come and see what I have done with the hiding-hole," said John, and led the way to the stairs.

The uneven stone steps had been cased with marble; windows of stained glass let in a soft light. The tiny room where through the centuries the crucifix had lain shining in the darkness was now a beautiful little oratory. John opened a door at the foot of the stairs, and the two went out into the park.

It was late October, but the sun was shining, and most of the trees still wore their autumn livery of brown and gold. The young man and girl came presently into a remote part of the park, not very far from the high road, really nothing more than a country lane, leading to Gorreston.

"Guess what I want to build here," said John.

"To build? Not a lodge?"

"No. Do you remember our talk about 'brown-robed monks and white-robed nuns'? I want to build a convent here, for a teaching order of nuns. There is no Catholic school for miles round."

"But, John—what is the good of all this when you will not be here?"

"My successor will see that things go on all serenely," he replied with a smile.

Jemima looked up at him with puzzled eyes.

"I cannot understand how you can give up all this, all your plans, all your pleasures, and go and bury yourself alive in a monastery, cousin John!"

"You will understand, Jemima, some day, please God," he answered softly.

The party of four, with Hicks and Rosalie in attendance, Judson having been sent on in advance, said good-bye to the English winter in the following week, and went off to Cappella. The Villa and surrounding land belonged now to Jemima, part of her inheritance from her father.

Lady Gorreston saw with satisfaction the colour returning to the girl's face, the light of awakening interest in her eyes as they settled down in their home on the shores of the ever-smiling sea. Jemima had been a good deal with her mother since Mr. Trevyck's death, and—as Lady Gorreston remarked to herself—"Selina was enough to make anybody dismal."

Immediately on their arrival John and Leo went off to call upon Father Sebastian, and, greatly to the grandmother's secret discomfiture at first, that ecclesiastic became a frequent visitor at the Villa. She became reconciled to his presence, however, when no signs appeared of what she styled "the

proselytising tendencies of Rome," and found him a very agreeable companion.

Leo's old passion for sketching returned, and he and Jemima went on expeditions in search of "effective bits" as of yore; but there was a difference. Companionship in those old days had been free and unrestrained; now—though she could not have told why—the girl felt that between herself and her brother was an intangible barrier; now and then she found herself thinking that she was like a homeless wanderer out in the cold and darkness, who could see through the lighted windows into a home where all was love and brightness and warmth, a home wherein Leo dwelt as a child of the house, while she could only stand outside.

Leo had been extremely reticent about his conversion, though he had confided to his sister that he had been under instruction for some time before his father's death. Mr. Trevyck knew of this fact, but had refused to treat it with any seriousness, telling his son that a little study would soon dissipate his fancies. So little importance did he attach to it that he all but forgot it as he grew daily worse in health.

"Did you have to study a great deal before you became a Catholic, Leo?" asked Jemima timidly. The brother and sister were sitting among the rocks, each with sketching block, but the girl's thoughts were far away from the scene before her.

"Study? I studied the catechism pretty thoroughly," replied Leo. "I wish I could get the effect of the sunlight on that brown sail."

"Only the catechism?" asked his sister, wonderingly.

"Oh, there's plenty of material for study in the catechism, I can tell you; but it was a lot easier for me than it was for Gorreston."

"Why?"

"You know poor old John had been brought up Church of England, 'blessed Reformation' and the 'evil practices of popery,' and all that humbug," said Leo laughingly; "it had all been drummed into him ever since he was old enough to take it in, and some of it stuck; so he had the task of clearing out all the rubbish of years, wrong beliefs, and erroneous ideas, and prejudices, while I had a perfectly empty head, never having troubled myself about anything of the kind; so it was all plain sailing for me."

"And"—with an increase of timidity: Jemima felt that she was treading on holy ground—"you are happy, Leo?"

"I believe that I am about as happy as anyone can be this side of heaven," answered her brother, with a strength of conviction that left no room for doubt.

Father Sebastian was sitting under the trellis in front of his house door, a few evenings after this conversation, when the tall figure of the English girl appeared before him. He rose quickly.

"If you please, Father," said Jemima, forgetting a carefully-prepared speech she had rehearsed all the way from the Villa, "I have come to ask you to make me a Catholic."

Lady Gorreston received the news that there was "another pervert in the family"—so she phrased it—with composure.

"Perhaps it is just as well, under the circumstances," she said enigmatically, and Jemima did not ask for an explanation: she would not have received one if she *had* asked.

"There is going to be a wedding, grandmama," she said, coming into the old lady's room some three or four weeks after the catechism study had begun. Lady Gorreston looked up quickly.

"Whose wedding?"

"Rosalie and Hicks. Yes, I thought the news would surprise you. I always thought they got on remarkably well together, but Hicks is a good deal older than Rosalie; it never occurred to me that there was more than friendship between them."

"How much older is Hicks?"

"Ten or eleven years. He was twenty when he came to us. He must be about thirty-eight."

"A very suitable difference of age in my opinion," said Lady Gorreston judicially; "a man should be quite ten years older than his wife."

"I have been telling Leo; he thinks it would be a good plan to leave them here as caretakers when we go home. You know dear father, who always thought of everybody, left them each a nice annuity."

"Yes," said the old lady, abstractedly; "it would be a good plan. I am very glad we are out of England this winter, child. There is to be a disgusting fuss over Clare Newton's wedding. Any amount of display. Your mother's letter that came to-day is full of the glories of the trousseau. Most unbecoming, I consider such ostentation, Clare's father being a clergyman."

Jemima sat down by the window and looked out with soft, bright, unseeing eyes, her thoughts far away.

"You look very happy, child," remarked her grandmother affectionately. She was very fond of the girl.

"I am happy, granny. Father Sebastian is going to receive me into the Church next week. I shall make my first Communion on Christmas Day."

Lady Gorreston looked at her curiously.

"I should really like to know, Jemima—if you can tell me without any flights of rhetoric—*what* is the attraction you find in the Church of Rome?"

"Oh, that's easy enough to tell, granny. It is so very real."

"Real? What do you mean, child?"

"Well, you will not think me impertinent and disrespectful if I speak plainly, granny? But the first thing a Catholic thinks about when going to stay at a new place is whether there is a Catholic Church within reach. You see his religion has the first place in his mind. You are a member of the

Church of England, but you never inquired whether there was a church at Cappella, and, as there is not, you never go. I have noticed that with other Protestants. They went to church if they felt inclined, not because it would be wrong not to go, and the least little thing is made an excuse to stay away. Then they quarrel so much among themselves, and the clergy teach two or three different doctrines. Oh, I could never be a Protestant!"

"That will do, child," said the old lady drily. "How do Hicks and Rosalie reconcile their different religions?"

"Different religions? Hicks is a Catholic."

"Has he changed his religion, then?"

"He has always been a Catholic. His parents were Catholics. We never troubled about the servants' religion; and of course Hicks could always go to his own church quite easily, as we were nearly always in Catholic countries."

"I call it decidedly Jesuitical," said the old lady severely.

"What is Jesuitical?" asked Leo, coming in, followed by John Gorreston.

"Hicks saying nothing about his religion."

"I don't see what the Jesuits have to do with that, granny. Did you ever see a Jesuit?"

"Yes. I was once over-persuaded, against my better judgment, to go and hear a famous Jesuit preacher, a very handsome man; but *all* Jesuits are handsome. If a man is not good-looking he is not admitted into the Society."

"What a band of Adonises they must be! My beloved granny, who has been telling you such nonsense?"

"I read it in a Church newspaper, I think. No; someone told me that it is a fact."

"And how did you like the sermon?"

"Oh, the man was a fluent speaker, but he talked as if Roman Catholics were the salt of the earth. No doubt you think you are. I shall be the only heretic in the place soon," said the old lady irritably.

A telegram came to Jemima on what she noted in her diary as "The happiest day of my life," the day of her reception into the One Fold, whereof Our Lord is Shepherd. The telegram bore the words: "Heartfelt congratulations," and was signed "Bretton."

"I have to go back to Gorreston to give the tenants a jollification immediately after Christmas," said John Gorreston next day to Jemima. "I want a chat with you, so come for a walk along the shore, will you?"

They went off together; Lady Gorreston looked after them and sighed.

"And to think of the plans I made for those two, and all to no purpose!" she said, her only auditor being Leo.

"Well, gran, you know 'the best laid plans of mice and men,' etcetera," said her grandson, mischievously.

"Do not inflict your hackneyed quotations on me, Leo," returned Lady Gorreston. "The world has gone mad, I think."

The sea-wall afforded a comfortable seat. Jemima

scrambled upon it, and John stood beside her. "I wanted to say something rather important to you, cousin," he said gravely. "I could not say it before. Now"—with a smile that was very winning in its brotherly affection—"you are one of us. You wondered a little, didn't you, about my anxiety to have your opinion concerning the improvements at the Hall?"

"Yes; I did wonder, rather."

"You remember the Blue Lady, Jemima. You know the legend?"

"Yes; but——"

"It will be fulfilled, Jemima. You will be the owner of Gorreston Hall."

"But—cousin—how can I be? I am not your next-of-kin."

"Gorreston Hall and the land around it are entirely at my disposal, cousin Jemima. I intend to make it over to you by a deed of gift, knowing that you will enter into all my plans for the place and people."

"Oh, cousin John! Think of the responsibility! Think of the magnitude of a gift like that to a girl!"

"I have thought very thoroughly about it, and considered the question from all sides," he said, smiling up at her anxious face. "There is no one else whom I should like to have the old place. But I make one condition: your eldest son must take the name of Gorreston."

"But suppose I do not marry, cousin?"

"In that case," said John, with a mirthful twinkle of his dark eyes, "we shall have to think out some other way of perpetuating the name."

"Does Leo know?"

"Yes, and approves; but we will say nothing to the gran at present. The dear old lady is sufficiently riled just now: we will not offer her another bone of contention."

To everybody's surprise, Peter Bretton appeared next morning at breakfast-time.

"Well, really, Mr. Peter, how you young men do rush about!" exclaimed Lady Gorreston, beaming upon him. She was unmistakably pleased to see him.

"Don't you think, Lady Gorreston, that you might—for old friendship's sake—drop the 'Mister' and let me be plain—very plain—Peter?"

"Don't fish, Bretton," from John; "nobody is going to bite."

"I'll wait a few days in order to get accustomed to the idea," returned the old lady meaningly; and Jemima noticed a slight increase of colour in Mr. Bretton's face, and wondered thereat.

She went presently, with a huge basket of flowers and sweet-smelling grasses, up to the Grotto. The little place was no longer neglected and forsaken, except for the yearly pilgrims' visit. The sweet face of the Mother of God smiled from amid a wealth of blossoms. The statue stood against a background of rich greenery. Jemima was busy filling a

couple of great jars, standing one on each side of the steps, when she heard a voice behind her, and turning, saw Peter Bretton.

"The Angelus is ringing," he said; "shall we say it together?"

So they knelt together before the statue of the Immaculate Mother, and when they rose Bretton said:

"Let me help you," and together they finished the decoration of the shrine.

"I have not yet thanked you for your telegram; it was very kind of you to send it. But—how did you know?"

"Your brother sent me word. He knew what joy the news would give me."

Jemima glanced at him quickly, then looked away in tremulous embarrassment and wonder.

"If you knew—if you could but guess—how I have waited, and hoped and prayed that one day that news would come to me, you would not thank me for that poor, bald little congratulation," he said gently.

Jemima made an incoherent reply.

Bretton came a little nearer to her, trying to see her averted face.

"You know that I love you, don't you?" he said tenderly.

"Do you think you could care for me a little bit?"

"I—I didn't know you cared," she answered, with a little sob in her voice.

"But you know now. How could I see you and not care? Why, I have struggled against my love for you from the first time I saw you."

"Even when you were angry with me for climbing into the ruins, and nearly shook me?"

"Even then," he said with a smile. "Heart's treasure, I love you. Will you be my dear and honoured wife?"

And Jemima, from sheer happiness, cried on his shoulder, and abused herself for doing so.

Lady Gorreston saw them coming back to the house together, and went out upon the terrace to meet them.

"Are you aware that the luncheon bell rang three-quarters of an hour ago, Peter?" with considerable emphasis on the name,

"Jemima and I had a good deal to say to each other, grandmama," he said boldly; and Jemima fled.

Gorreston's master is treading the "more perfect way," and the old place knows him no more; but Jemima's eldest boy bears the Gorreston name, and the good works begun while John Gorreston ruled there are carried on enthusiastically by the present owners of the Hall.

Down at Trevyck Leo is a model landlord, and Summerton rejoices in a new Catholic church of great beauty, and schools that satisfy the most fastidious of inspectors; but, to the disgust of his mother, who has made a second marriage, he remains an inveterate bachelor.

(THE END.)

A New Year Homily.

SINCE the joy-bells, twelve months ago, rang out the old year, and rang in the new, multitudes have dropped out of life into the depths of eternity. You have been spared; you have been given another chance. But? Do you know what it is to sit down, at the close of 1915, and have something hang upon the soul like lead—to have a cloud between you and the throne of prayer? Do you know what it is to lie down at night, and look back upon the days of the old year that have passed for ever out of your ken, and find no bright spot upon which the memory lingers with pleasure? This is because the "still small voice of conscience" is calling the soul to account.

Doubtless, year after year you have been making good resolutions, and forming plans for the future. And ere the year was middle-aged your resolutions were broken and your plans "gone awry." That is because the key-note of your philosophy of life is the gratification of the *ego* instead of the honour of God. You have determined to be rich; yet you are more likely to die a poor man. You have longed for distinction; yet you are never likely to achieve it. You have sighed for pleasure; yet every cup has been dashed, and every hope fled from you! You need a principle which will lead you to be active for the welfare of men. Your reason and conscience may decide, that you ought to live for the good of your kind; and, at times you may rouse up; but the moving power is not uniform and steady. You need a principle which will ever keep you alive to your real duty. Moreover, you can act but a few days on earth. You will soon know whether you are to wear a crown, or be clothed with shame and everlasting contempt—soon know how bright that crown is or how deep the despair. All the realities of the eternal world will soon open upon you, and you want a principle abiding within you, which will bear you on in duty, active, laborious, self-denying, widening your influence, and adding strength to your character and hopes through life; but this principle is to be obtained only by seeking His approbation from whom you receive every mercy that has ever visited your heart, every joy that has cheered you; every hope for which your heart has longed; and every yearly chance of regeneration.

And what is the secret of it all? To live for God, and for God alone! Lay up your wealth in heaven—and you may increase it daily—and it cannot fail you. Try to subdue that temper, so irritable, so unholy, and you will find that, if you do it for the sole purpose of honouring God, He will give you strength. Try to conquer that covetousness which is idolatry, and you can do it effectually and thoroughly by subduing the heart for the sake of living entirely to God. You offer a prayer for men—it shall not be lost upon the

wind. You help to send a missionary to pagan lands—your aid shall not be lost on the wayside. The messenger of mercy and light whom you aid in sending abroad, will find the hungry who will receive the bread of life. And when, at last, you come to be gathered to the home of the prophets and apostles, and the spirits of just men made perfect, then you will still more clearly see the results of a life whose aim was to honour God. Then will the poor whom you fed, the sick whom you visited, the stranger whom you sheltered, the distressed whom you relieved, gather around you, and hail you a benefactor. Look back upon the past year with its broken resolutions; and its fruitless plans; and then, with this picture I have just drawn for you, look forward into the dawn of the New Year, and remember that you have been given another chance!

Your way is the way of the Cross. "Perfection comes through pain, or something analogous to pain. Marble is hewn into the statue by the blows of the chisel and the mallet; the diamond is cut and polished into glittering facets by keen instruments and the remorseless wheel; the dream of the architect comes into being only when stones torn from the hillside are cut into symmetry by ceaseless blows, and when trees shorn of their dignity and foliage are sawed and planed into proper dimensions. The laughing child, the smooth-browed youth and maiden have that beauty of Nature about them that we see in the blooming meadow and the quiet forest, but it is only when time, experience, and adversity have written their record upon the brow and the brain behind it that men and women reach their true maturity of character. This is so because God hath said to Man and Woman: 'By thy sweat and thy travail, thou shalt conquer earth'—not by thy ease or pleasure."

You have the Catholic Church—that mightiest of all influences—under whose broad and powerful aid individual and national character soon ripens into greatness, and one which is, of all others, the grand instrument of blessing the world. Tens of thousands breathing the spirit of that Church are already in the field at work, trying to bless and save the earth. Some fall—strong ones, too—"too much for piety to spare"; but the plan is the plan of God, and the removal of this or that agent does not for a moment retard His great design. Under the full, the pure, the purifying light of the gospel, you are called to live and act. The state of the world is such, and so much depends on action, that everything seems to say loudly to every man, "Do something—do it!—do it!" Keep your heart with diligence; break away from every sin; repent of every sin; live unto God; and your reward shall be what "ear hath not heard, eye hath not seen, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive."

You have heard the joybells ring in this New Year, you have therefore another chance of realizing this noble ideal—it may be your last!

W. J. B. W.



A Literary Circle for Young Readers of "The Cross."

Conducted by FRANCIS.

RULES OF THE GUILD.

- I. The Guild of Blessed Gabriel is a literary circle open to boys and girls under 18 years of age.
- II. The members will be expected to spread devotion to Blessed Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows, by practising the virtues of purity, charity and truth; and by living lives worthy of him who is to be their model and guide.
- III. They will at all times observe the conditions under which the competitions will be held.
- IV. They will endeavour to bring as many new members as they can into the Guild of Blessed Gabriel.

WE stand at the cross-roads where a year of misery and bloodshed and suffering fades into the mists of the past, and a new mysterious year comes across the hills of the dawn to meet and greet us, and here with my loving, devoted band of boys and girls gathered about me—loyal comrades and true friends all—I pray that for them and all they love the New Year may hold many a smile of happiness and few tears of bitterness or sorrow, that during the twelve months of it and through every day of it the Babe of Bethlehem may watch over them, His Holy Mother guide and guard them, and our own dear Blessed Gabriel plead for them before God's Throne. And if my prayer be granted and my New Year's wish fulfilled, little may the members of our Guild reckon of riches or fame or worldly power or any of the fleeting, unsatisfying things for sake of which and in pursuit of which so many foolish people ruin and blast their lives. God bless all my dear comrades in the New Year and in every year to come!

The opening of this month's mail has been a very, very pleasing task, and it has left me happier than I can say. So many of my boys and girls have sent me greeting cards and good

wishes and vows of friendship that I am really overwhelmed, and can hardly find words to express the gratitude I feel. The members of the Guild in **St. Bonaventure's College**, **St. John's**, Newfoundland, send me as a souvenir their beautiful magazine, *The Adelpian*, which in contents and turn-out is a credit to everybody connected with it. Success to them and to it in the New Year! Cards and greetings have come to me from **Arthur Murphy**, **Philie J. Cauldwell**, **Isabella Reilly**, **Chrissie Burke**, **Nancy Fullerton**, **May Allen**, **Mary Lelia Maguire**, **Mary Rennie**, **Eily Barrett**, **Sara M. Garner**, **Lizzie G. Horgan**, **Kathleen McGrath**, **Maureen O'Brien**, **Mary O'Toole**, **James F. Kelly**, and my friend of friends, **Lilian Mary Nally**, who sends me this sweet and consoling message (all these letters have been with me since the middle of December):—"On Christmas morning, when I feel near to God, I will ask him to bless and reward you for your goodness and sympathy; and now I wish the Angel of Bethlehem to whisper in your ear how I shall pray for you when I pray for those I love before the Crib of the Great Little One. May this be the happiest Christmas you have ever known!" Need I say that I am grateful? Need I say that I wish the sender of that message every holy joy and every blessing in God's unbounded store? In the course of a very welcome letter, our old friend, **Proinsias Mac Thighearnain**, writes:—"I feel myself fortunate in having been a member of the Guild, for in it I have met many dear friends. Canon Sheehan says in one of his works that 'books are greater than men, because they reveal man at his highest.' This is, perhaps, why we members of the Guild are so united in holy friendship. We see one another only through what we write—and what we write shows us at our best. This is why I should always be afraid to meet a member of the Guild. I would not like them to see me, for fear they might lose their good opinion of me, seeing my faults and shortcomings; but whatever be my fate in life, and whatever path lies before me to tread, I shall always preserve clear and pure in my thoughts the memory of Blessed Gabriel's Guild, and of the happiness it has thrown across my life." If Proinsias does not like to meet any of the other members what is he to say to this invitation from **Mollie Joyce**? "Proinsias Mac Thighearnain," writes Mollie, "must think me very rude for not thanking him for his kind but ill-deserved praise of my last composition. Please tell him that I do thank him most heartily, and that there is always a warm welcome waiting for him and all the members of the Guild at 'the house with the green hall door, standing by the singing river Lee'!" Is Francis included in the invitation, too, Mollie? I have very great pleasure in bidding welcome to the following new members:—**Mary O'Toole** (Dublin), **Nora O'Sullivan** (Presentation Convent, Hospital, Co. Limerick), **Annie R. Jackson** (Howth), **Kate Josephine Brady** (Cavan), **Philie J. Cauldwell** (Dublin), **Arthur Murphy** and **Pat Murphy** (do.).

" 8 Oxford Road, Ranelagh, 12/11/'15.—Dear Francis—

**Another
Farewell
Letter.**

Christmas marks my eighteenth birthday, the barrier that is to cut me off from the Guild. I wish I could postpone the event for a few months at least; but, alas, I cannot. My birthday always falls on December 23rd, and I dare not hope that this time it will be considerate enough to wait a little longer, at my desire. So with its arrival I must withdraw from the Guild, in which I have passed so many enjoyable hours, now gone beyond recall. But the memory of them will ever remain fresh in my mind. I shall always look back with pleasure to the endearing companionship that the members of the Guild have so freely given me and the kind words of encouragement and cheer its master has never failed to speak. Should I need a reminder of the Guild, which is scarcely probable, I have my prizes as lasting and cherished souvenirs. To you, dear Francis, and all the members of the Guild, I wish a very, very happy New Year.—Your sincere friend, **Chrissie Burke.**"

(God bless you and direct you always, Chrissie, and keep your heart as light and care-free as it has been during your sojourn in the Guild! You have been one of our best members, and I trust you will still continue to be one of the best friends of—FRANCIS.)

(1) All newcomers will please write a personal note to FRANCIS, apart from their competition **Important.** papers, asking to be admitted to membership of the Guild. (2) A Badge, bearing the portrait of Blessed Gabriel, is awarded to the member who brings five new recruits into the Guild.

A NEW YEAR RESOLUTION.

To make the Guild of Blessed Gabriel known among my friends and school companions, and to do all that lies in my power to increase the circulation of THE CROSS.

For the best short essay on "The Old Year and the New" the prize is awarded to **Chrissie Burke**, 8 Oxford Road, Ranelagh, Dublin, and I am sure her beautiful and thoughtful paper will be admired by all the members. I was very well pleased

with the essays sent in by Nora O'Sullivan, Josie O'Brien, Annie R. Jackson, Brigid Trainor, Julia Wall, and Tillie Maguire.

For the best little letter on "What I mean to do for the Guild in the New Year," the prize goes to **Members Philie J. Cauldwell**, 3 Sterling Street, **Under 12.** Dublin, and if she lives up to all her promises the Guild will be the better of having her as a member.

THE NEXT COMPETITIONS.

I.—For Members over 12 and under 18 years of age.

A Handsome Book Prize is offered for the best set of three quotations (prose or verse) on Spring.

II.—For Members under 12 years of age.

A handsome Book Prize is offered for the best Legend of St. Brigid.

All compositions must be certified by some responsible person as being the unaided work of the competitors. They must have attached to them the coupon which will be found in this issue (one coupon will be sufficient for all the members of a family), and essays and letters must be written on **one side only** of the paper. They must be sent so as to reach the Office of THE CROSS not later than **January 14th.** All letters to be addressed—FRANCIS, c/o THE CROSS, St. Paul's Retreat, Mount Argus, Dublin.

PRIZE ESSAY.

THE OLD YEAR AND THE NEW.

The old year with trembling mien is tottering down the steep decline that leads to oblivion. Down, down, the flame of life still flickers, but only for a brief space more, for the birth of the New Year marks the Old Year's doom. The bells will soon be ringing—a knell for the one, a welcome to the other.

As the December days creep on, a feeling akin to sadness steals over one. It would seem as if one were watching at the death-bed of a dear friend. The dying year calls up memories sad and pleasant, and it is the links of these that bind and endear it to us. The curtain of time is drawn aside, old scenes re-acted, familiar faces, perhaps gone for ever, rise up before us, familiar voices sound in our ears, and the heart yearningly clings to things that have been. But what of the "things that might have been?" A glance into the mirror of time reveals "the might have beens." It is pondering over these that causes the sharp pangs of regret, that, even though vain, will not be quieted. After one look we would fain turn away, for the beauty of the reflection is sadly marred. The flowers of virtue that were to be so lovingly cultivated, to bloom in all their innocent beauty, under the tender care of devoted hands, are but scattered here and there, and myriads of ugly weeds spread their noxious influence in the endeavour to destroy.

Good intentions are but flimsy after all, and require patience and endurance, without which they are merely castles in the air. Human nature is a frail barque at most, and on the ocean of life has to encounter many threatening whirlpools, more menacing than the Scylla and Charybdis of Ulysses. Determination and perseverance alone will steer us on to the port of safety, where reward awaits those that have fought and conquered.

The old year will soon be gone, the new will open for us a clear, unsullied page in the book of life. We are entering on a period, knowing not what the progress of time will bring forth. But whatever betide, whether ill winds buffet us in their cruel embrace or good fortune smile on us benignly, we have only to look to One for guidance and protection, and He will surely lead us in safety to the eternal shores.

CHRISSIE BURKE.

In Thanksgiving, Etc.

Sister M. Philomena (Roscommon), on behalf of some clients of Blessed Gabriel, sends ten shillings (second subscription) towards the expenses of his Canonization.

J. B. returns grateful thanks to Our Lady of Sorrows, Blessed Gabriel and Gemma Galgani, for a cure and employment through their intercession, and sends a shilling towards the Causes of Blessed Gabriel and Gemma, with promise of a further donation.

Mrs. Maloney (Randalstown) sends one-and-sixpence towards the expenses of the Canonization of Blessed Gabriel and two shillings towards the Causes of Gemma Galgani and the Little Flower.

James M. Mulholland, a little boy of six years, writes a pretty little letter enclosing sixpence towards the Cause of Blessed Gabriel.

A Client of Gemma sends five shillings towards the expenses of her Cause in thanksgiving for a favour attributed towards her intercession.

J. W. R. (London) sends half-a-crown towards the Canonization of Blessed Gabriel in thanksgiving for favours received through his intercession.

E. de M. (Glasgow) sends two shillings towards the expenses of the Cause of Gemma Galgani.

The above donations, for which we are sincerely grateful, will be duly forwarded to the Postulator at Rome.

Contributions towards the expenses of the Causes of Blessed Gabriel and Gemma Galgani and favours received through their intercession will be gladly acknowledged in these pages.

TO OUR PROMOTERS.—In answer to inquiries made from time to time we think it well to let supporters of this magazine know that all our supporters and promoters participate in the benefit of four hundred and thirty-four Masses, specially offered every year for benefactors by the Fathers of this Province, as well as in the prayers, penances and good works performed daily by all the members of the Congregation of the Passion.